

Family Devotional

From May 28, 2017

Read: Jonah 1-3 or "God's Messenger" from *The Jesus Story Book Bible* page 160

Connect: Lauren couldn't believe her eyes. Kevin, the boy who lived next door was sitting on his front step, crying. She watched him for a few moments, trying to decide what to do. Normally, Lauren would run to comfort someone who was crying. But Kevin was different. Kevin was probably the meanest person she knew. He was cruel to his own family's pets and constantly teased Lauren's dog Mittens. He even tore her dolls apart. For those reasons and more, Lauren tried not to feel sorry for Kevin.

As she watched his cries seemed to get louder, as if he knew she was watching. Why should I feel sorry for him? She asked herself. But even while she was thinking the words, she knew she would be wrong to try and pay him back by being mean even though he was mean to her.

Finally she threw up her hands and walked over to Kevin. "Are you OK?" she asked.

"Go away!" Kevin shouted. Lauren turned away, her feelings hurt. But after a moment she turned back and sat on the step next to Kevin.

"What's wrong?" she asked.

Kevin sniffled loudly and wiped his tears with his sleeve. "You wouldn't understand."

"Maybe I would." She said.

"I locked myself out of my house," he said. "And my parents won't be home all day."

"You're home alone?" Lauren asked. When he nodded, she really did feel sorry for him. She wondered if this was the first time he had spent the whole day by himself.

"You don't have to stay here," she said. "My mom's home. You could ... you could come over to my house until your parents get home."

Kevin looked at Lauren in surprise. "I could?" he asked as if he couldn't believe her. "Is it ok with your mom?"

"Let's go ask her," Lauren suggested as she stood. Kevin followed her into the house. Lauren saw a shocked expression on her mom's face at first, but it was quickly replaced with a warm smile. After Lauren explained the situation her mom quickly assured Kevin he was welcome to stay. As they were leaving the kitchen, Lauren caught her mom's eyes and she gave Lauren a wink. That's when Lauren realized her mom knew how hard it must have been to welcome Kevin in to spend the day with her family, but she was proud of Lauren for showing compassion even to the meanest boy she knew.

Story Adapted from Josh McDowell's Family Devotional

Reflect: How are the stories about Jonah and Lauren similar?

Have you ever felt like you should be compassionate to someone even when you didn't want to? How did you choose to act?

God loves us no matter what we do, but as his children he wants us to show others his loving compassion especially when they don't deserve it, because that is exactly how he loves us!

Remember: Work together as a family to memorize/meditate on **memorize/meditate on Psalm 103:13.**

As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him.

Ideas: Write this passage down and hang it on the refrigerator. Say it together as a family during meal time each day. Write it on a chalk or white board and erase a couple of words each day until you can say it by memory.

Respond:

"Dear God, thank you for reminding us that you love us no matter what. Because we have received that love from you, help us show others that same unconditional love even when it's hard..... Amen!"